(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to enhance facilities in the hospitals;

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when it is likely to be implemented; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (c) Enhancing of facilities in hospitals is a continuous process. In so far as Central Government Hospitals *viz.* Safdarjung Hospital, Dr. RML Hospital and LHMC and Associated Hospitals are concerned, the facilities required are assessed and enhanced from time to time within the available resources.

NICD report on epidemic in Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal

2225. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY:

SHRI ANIL SHARMA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a three-member expert team of the National Institute for Communicable Diseases is investigating into a strange epidemic in Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal;

(b) whether the team has completed its work;

(c) if so, what are its findings; and

(d) the details of assistance given by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (d) After receiving information from Health Secretary, Government of Himachal Pradesh regarding admission of a few cases presenting with fever and haemoptysis (blood in sputum) in two hospitals of Shimla district and Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, a team of experts from National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD), Delhi consisting of

epidemiologist, Microbiologist and Entomologist was deputed immediately to visit the affected areas of Shimla district from 14th to 17th February, 2002 for investigating the outbreak and to provide technical guidance to the State Government for containing the outbreak. Another team consisting of six public health experts was sent to Chandigarh on 22.2.2002. These teams visited the affected areas and examined the patients in the hospitals. After the visit, the teams submitted their report, which confirmed the outbreak of febrile illness with haemoptysis (blood in sputum) reported in Hatkoti Village of Jubbal-Kotkhai Block, Shimla District, as pneumonic plague. A total of 16 cases, including 4 deaths (two at PGI, Chandigarh and two at Civil Hospital, Rohru, Shimla) were reported during the outbreak. No deaths were reported from Uttaranchal.

The following steps were taken to contain the outbreak in coordination with the State Government:

> The emergency medical requirements of the Government of Himachal Pradesh were promptly met with.
> Guidelines were issued to Health Authorities of Government of Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Punjab, Haryana and UT of Chandigarh on the following issues:
  — Strengthening of surveillance
  — Chemoprophylaxis of close contacts
  — Quarantine of close contacts
  — Restriction of movement of persons in affected areas
  — Standard work precautions
  — Safe disposal of bodies of persons dying due to plague.
> Door to door interaction with the population in the affected and adjoining village for dispensing antibiotics, obtaining information about the new cases and educating the people was conducted.
> Fumigation of the patients' houses as well as the transport vehicles was carried out using Formalin (10%).
> About 28,000 to 30,000 people, including doctors, para-medical personnel and health workers were provided with chemoprophylaxis.

> Proper treatment of patients and isolation of cases in the hospitals.

> Quarantine of close contacts.

> IEC campaign focusing on restriction of mobility, immediate reporting to health facility in case of fever etc. and reassuring the public not to panic.

Population Policy

2226. DR. KARAN SINGH:
SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU):

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that though India adopted a population control in 1950s, there has been no effective check on the rate of growth of poulation over the last 25 years;

(b) whether any special plan of action has been or is being worked out since the population crossed the 100 crore mark;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the contemplated population policy for the Tenth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (d) "No population control policy" was adopted in 1950's. However, India started a national programme emphasizing family planning to the extent necessary for reducing birth rates "to stabilise the population at a level consistent with the requirement of national economy". After 1952, sharp decline in death rates were, however, not accompanied by a similar drop in birth rates.

The census figures of the last four decades indicate a perceptible decline in recent years, in the growth rate of the population of India.